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State Department review completed

JCS review(s) completed.

THE RHEE-ROBERTSON TALKS

Probable South Korean Policies

Since the beginning of the truce talks in 1951, Rhee has presented a series of proposals as his price for agreeing to an armistice. In general, these demands reflected his adamant opposition to any perpetuation of Korea's division, or the retention of Chinese troops on Korean soil, plus his doubt that political negotiations with the Communists could accomplish unification. Specifically, his demand for American security commitments mirrored his fear of a repetition of the 1950 aggression, concern with Sino-Soviet power on Korea's borders, and doubt that the US or the UN would come to his aid if South Korea were again attacked.

In his opening talk on 26 June with Robertson, Rhee put forth four proposals or "modifications" of the truce terms as the price of his acceptance. These were: (1) moving the remaining 8,600 anti-Communist POW's to the demilitarized zone for takeover by the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, and allowing Chinese POW's to remain on Cheju Island under the NNRC; (2) placing a 90-day time limit on the postarmistice political conference; (3) securing economic aid from the United States and sufficient military aid to the South Korean army to produce a build-up to "approximately" 20 divisions; and (4) immediate "guaranteeing" of a United States-South Korea mutual security pact.

While continuing to stress the need to ensure South Korean territorial integrity, Rhee apparently dropped his demands for immediate Chinese Communist withdrawal in this initial meeting. Neither side mentioned the vital issue of the released anti-Communist North Korean POW's. Point 1 met Rhee's opposition to the entrance into South Korea of Communist "brainwashers" by limiting their activities to the off-shore islands and the demilitarized zone. Regarding point 2, Robertson said he thought the 90-day limit was an "impossible condition" but would pass it on to higher American authorities. Robertson said regarding the pact, with apparently no reaction either way from Rhee, that the treaty "would follow the general lines of the American pact with the Philippines." The latter provision

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In putting forth his proposals, Rhee asked for several "clarifications" which the United States answered in an aide-memoire of 27 June. Briefly, the United States accepted Rhee's POW proposal if it proved "logistically feasible," and if South Korea cooperated with the UN in maintaining the security of the remaining POW's and in assisting in their transfer to NNRC custody. Regarding a time limit on the political conference, the United States said it could not impose such a limit on other powers, but in case of Communist exploitation of the discussions for propaganda or infiltration purposes, it would "be prepared to act in concert with South Korea with a view to retiring jointly from the political conference." The United States also agreed to grant South Korea economic assistance and logistical and other support to strengthen and maintain South Korean forces to the level of "more or less 20 divisions." Robertson then said that the United States was prepared immediately "to begin negotiations" looking toward a mutual defense pact along the lines of the Philippines treaty. The United States also promised Rhee a high-level, two-power political conference after a truce was signed but before the postarmistice conference "at some intermediate point" to "confer on all aspects of our common objectives."

In return for these concessions, the United States asked Rhee: (1) to accept UNC authority to conduct and conclude hostilities; (2) to support the armistice and pledge "full collaboration" in carrying out the truce terms; and (3) to retain South Korean forces under UNC operational control until both governments mutually agree that the arrangement is no longer necessary. Rhee gave no indication of either accepting or rejecting the three conditions.

On 28 June, apparently in answer to the UN request of the 27th, Rhee submitted his own aide-memoire, injecting several new demands into the negotiations. He asked that: (1) a military pact be concluded prior to the armistice; (2) South Korean sea and air forces be built up commensurate with the army; (3) if necessary, a further build-up of South Korean forces take place to match them against "an immediate neighbor;" (4) remaining antirepatriate Korean POW's be questioned jointly by the United States and South Korea, and all POW's be immediately released if loyal to South Korea; and (5) American and South Korean delegates withdraw from the postarmistice political conference after 90 days and resume military operations without further consultations with other nations. Rhee also "agreed" to keep his forces within the UNC "so long as the UNC supports the . . . common cause by settling the war with . . ."

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On 29 June Robertson informed Rhee that his aide-memoire was inaccurate and irrelevant in many respects and "could not provide a basis for discussion." After a careful and explicit review by Robertson of President Eisenhower's and Secretary Dulles' offers of support and assistance, and explanations on the development of the political conference, Rhee said he would revise his previous aide-memoire in an effort to "bring it into line with our ideas." Rhee has indicated that he will present his "final proposal" to the UN on 1 July.

Rhee's current intention is apparently to make a truce unworkable or to prevent it completely. He would prefer the continuation of hostilities to any truce. If he is persuaded to accept an armistice, however, he will desire maximum guarantees from the United States, partly out of genuine concern for South Korea's security and partly in hopes that the truce will become unacceptable to the Communists. He does not seem to want a complete break with the United States, and he probably believes that his stubborn opposition will keep the United States militarily committed in Korea.

In seeking to delay, alter, undermine, or block an armistice, Rhee can:

- (1) increase his cooperation with the Chinese Nationalists;
- (2) seize UN supplies and equipment;
- (3) release additional POW's;
- (4) prohibit Koreans from working for UN agencies;
- (5) utilize present or future discussions to revert to his earlier "minimum demands and/or seek a military pact on his terms;
- (6) find it "impossible" to prevent popular violence against UN truce supervisory personnel, despite his promises to the UNC;
- (7) withdraw his troops from UN operational control by "interpreting" the equivocal language of any agreement to his liking;
- (8) continuously increase his demands in view of his past successes at winning...

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(9) threatening to, or actually commencing, independent military action in hopes of embroiling the United States in further military operations in Korea.

Whether he will undertake these or other actions depends on his estimate at a particular time of how far he can go without actually causing a withdrawal of American support.

#### Possible Communist Courses of Action

The Communists are not expected to take any major action until it becomes clear to them whether or not the UN Command and President Rhee are united in their policies toward the Communists. There are advantages for the Communists in either an American-South Korean split or certain types of American-South Korean agreements.

The Communists in their 19 June letter indicated willingness to conclude a truce either with or without South Korea, provided that the UN Command could implement the truce. The Communist preference probably was and is for a truce which would exclude South Korea and would be physically contested by South Korea. ✓

On 29 June General Clark proposed to the Communists that the draft armistice agreement be signed, promised to "make every effort to obtain the cooperation" of South Korea in implementing the truce, and stated that the UN Command was unable to recover the released prisoners. Although the press made it appear that Clark was offering the Communists a truce excluding South Korea, the letter did not support that interpretation and the Communists did not so interpret it. They rejected the proposal and reaffirmed their demand for recovery of the released prisoners, which has been their condition for a truce which would include South Korea.

The Communists probably believe that Rhee, for reasons of face, will be unwilling to make a serious effort to recover the prisoners. They may also believe that the UN Command, desiring a truce, will press Rhee to make the effort. So long as there is some prospect of again embroiling Rhee and the UN Command on this issue, the Communists will probably persist in their demand.

More important to the Communists, however, are the larger issues in the Rhee-Robertson talks. They cannot know, at this

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The possibility for which the Communists probably hope is that the talks will break down as a result of Rhee's excessive demands. The Communists would probably await Rhee's and the UN Command's subsequent actions, for example, Rhee's withdrawal of South Korean forces from the UN Command, and the latter's decision whether to remain in South Korea or withdraw. If UN forces were to remain, the Communists would probably agree to a truce and await American-South Korean conflict on its implementation. If the UN forces were to be withdrawn from Korea, the Communists might either attack them while they were withdrawing or wait to take action against a greatly weakened South Korea.

The other possibility, which the Communists probably regard as stronger, is that the United States and South Korea will reach various agreements. Certain of these possible agreements would also offer opportunities to exploit potential American-South Korean differences, while others would probably be regarded by the Communists as a genuine threat to their position in North Korea.

The Communists are aware, for example, that Rhee objects to the draft armistice provisions relating to the handling of the prisoners and the postarmistice political conference. They may be expecting him to make some such proposals as transfer of the prisoners to the demilitarized zone and setting a time-limit on the conference. They would be likely to reject the former proposal, in the hope that South Korean forces would physically oppose the entry of Indian troops into South Korea. They would almost certainly reject a cut-off date on the political conference, in the hope of dividing the UN allies.

The conclusion of an American-South Korean security pact would not necessarily be a barrier to signing a truce. The Communists might even regard such a pact as advantageous, if its terms seemed to encourage Rhee to launch an attack on North Korea without committing the United States to his defense in such an event. They might instead regard it, however, as evidence of an American intention to support Rhee in operations against North Korea even if the United States discouraged such plans.

Finally, if an agreement were reached to build up South Korean forces to a position far stronger than that of the North Korean forces, the Communists would probably refuse to conclude a truce. They would probably prefer to resume hostilities under